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Evaluation of the fecundity of the small copepod *Oithona* under different food and temperature conditions

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The study of small copepods, and especially of *Oithona*, has raised special interest in recent years due to its great abundance and ubiquitous presence in both coastal and oceanic regions, and with a distribution that extends from polar to tropical marine areas. The present study shows how different aspects of the fecundity of adult females of *Oithona* spp., such as the clutch size and egg production rates, might vary under different food and temperature conditions. Egg production rates showed significantly positive relationship with both temperature and protozooplankton biomass, and the development of the population seemed to be appreciably affected by temperature. Results suggested little variation of the clutch size with no evident effect of food concentration, although positively related to temperature. It is more likely the spawn frequency rather than the clutch size is the main fecundity parameter affected by temperature. *Oithona* spp. remained reproductive active throughout the study, including wintertime, stressing a successful reproductive strategy in unfavourable food conditions.

Keywords: copepod; *Oithona*; food; temperature

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